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The villager's diet is greatly affected by factors other than his financial condition or even his own personal likes and dislikes in food. Social pressure is a determining force.

Although the financial condition of the family does play a part in determining the differences in exact details of meals, most villagers' meals are very much alike. Rice is always preferred as the center or focus of each meal. Various items such as dried fish and some steamed, dried, or fresh vegetables may be added to the rice. Pickled items may also be included for variety and flavor.

Many village families, however, because of poverty or, sometimes, for reasons of thrift, substitute sweet potatoes for rice. If fresh, the sweet potatoes are steamed; otherwise, shredded dry sweet potatoes will usually be steamed together with the rice with which they are mixed. Sweet potatoes are much less expensive than rice, since they are grown on the less desirable nonirrigated dry land. Generally speaking, the villagers do not like sweet potatoes, and the adults complain that when children eat sweet potatoes they soon become hungry again and that they have stomach pains. On the other hand, rice is universally enjoyed and is held to be satisfactorily filling.

FOOD AND RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT

The villagers' best opportunities for good eating as well as entertainment come mainly on religious, magical, and other occasions which are usually marked by festivity. These festive occasions are fairly frequent and have widely diverse origins; the religion of the villagers is Taoist, with an admixture of Buddhist and animistic beliefs and, of course, ancestor worship. In addition, the people frequently take part in magical rituals requiring the offices of shamans and various forms of divination in the case of illness, when demons are thought to be involved. Ample food of relatively high quality is served at almost all of these frequently performed religious and magical rituals, especially when outside guests are present. The amounts and kinds of food vary with the occasion. At one of the ordinary *pai-pai* (any ritual in which food or other items are sacrificed to gods or ancestors), which in the Hsin Hsing village area occur at least four times a month and at which there are usually no guests, the additional food may be some cooked pork or fresh fish and soup. This food is used for the ceremonial sacrifices and eaten later. There are elaborate food preparations for larger *pai-pai* dinners such as those for the village god, or at marriage festivals to which outside guests are always invited, or to a lesser degree at dinners for laborers at harvesttime. Sometimes at weddings, funerals, or other such occasions there are as many as eighteen

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Possessed *t'iao t'ung* and his assistant recording "god's words."

Matsu procession: a successful call for rain.

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complete their education and so speak little if any Kuo-yu. Therefore, sometime during the preconscription age of twenty to twenty-two the government requires all males who have not completed primary school to attend special Kuo-Yu classes at the local primary school. The local police see to it that these boys attend the classes by imposing fines on the families of the negligent.

In general, the villagers disapprove of forced military service and deeply resent the conscription of men with families. The service imposes many hardships on the families, since it means a loss of farm labor and actual income. While the government assumes some financial responsibility for the families of such men, the aid is slow in coming, and when it does arrive, it is usually insufficient. Moreover, the soldier's pay is so small that rural families have to send their sons or husbands in the army additional spending money almost every month.

In addition to their concern about the hardships conscription imposes on the families, the villagers also fear for the safety of their sons and husbands. Many of the boys from the area are stationed on the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, rightly considered dangerous places. However, in spite of the many problems, one attitude the villagers express, at least in public, is that "like taxes, military service is every man's duty."

In most instances, before a group of villagers leaves to begin service in the army, several functions are held to "send the men off." The night before the departure a village *pai-pai* is held in which the gods are asked to speed the safe return of the conscripts. Every village family participates, each bringing a basket of sacrifice foods to the court of one of the larger village *tsu* houses. Here a shaman (*fa shih*) performs a ritual, inviting the gods to come and partake of the food offerings. At the conclusion of the ritual, each family takes its own food home and eats it for their evening meal.

That same night before the men leave, a large subscription dinner may be held in honor of the draftees. While every village family participates in the *pai-pai*, many families do not take part in this large dinner. Usually, only families which are friendly with the draftees' families will pay the subscription price and send a representative to attend. The representative may be the family head himself or a young son of sixteen years or more. One or two of the village men who earn extra income as cooks on various occasions prepare this dinner at no charge, and several village men and/or boys volunteer to serve the food. Some of the women usually help in the kitchen. At the dinner there is a good deal of drinking and drinking games, joking, and storytelling. In addition, some of the more respected *tsu* leaders or elected officials make speeches.

The next morning the men are sent off by most of the village. The

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The night before the wedding day, starting at midnight, a *pai-pai* is held at the boy's home. A Taoist priest (*tao shih*) officiates at the ceremony, held in honor of T'ien Kung to thank him for guarding the boy so that he could reach marriageable age, and prayers are said for the future of the boy and his family. At the same time, many lesser gods are invited to the *pai-pai* to be worshipped, and statues of these gods (which may belong to other villagers) are brought to the ancestral-worship room of the boy's home. The village orchestra performs during most of this ceremonial to entertain T'ien Kung. Many expensive foods, including at least one whole dressed pig and goat, bottles of wine, and a good deal of paper money are offered in honor of the gods and their soldiers and horses. (A description of the Taoist pantheon is found in Chapter 8.)

The *tao shih* invites the gods to partake of the sacrifices and transmits to them the prayers of the family. In the course of the ritual the *tao shih* and the participating members of the family, including the groom and his father and brothers, simulate trips to heaven and to the underworld to communicate with the gods. A shaman, known as *t'iao t'ung* (his broader functions are also described in detail in Chapter 8), accompanies them on these "trips." He is possessed by a local, less powerful, and important god known as an ambassador god and thus acts as the intermediary between the family and the higher gods. "After all," queried a villager on this point, "can a common man go directly on his own to see and talk with an emperor?"

Much of the food offered at the *pai-pai* is sent the next day as gifts to the girl's family; during the next several days it is fed to the guests who attend the wedding festival as well as the many people, usually *ch'in tsu* or fellow villagers, who help in the preparations and entertainment of the guests at the girl's village. The cost to both sets of parents is very great, and the poorest families save for a long time or borrow money in order to have a proper wedding festival.

While the boy's family is holding the *pai-pai* on the night before the marriage, the girl's family is busy with preparations for the next day. When the marriage broker, accompanied by the carriers bearing more gifts, and the village orchestra arrive, they are fed in the girl's village. Then, they help the girl's family load the many carts with her dowry and the sweet cakes which accompany the bride when she goes to the groom's village in her sedan chair.

The vehicles which carry the gifts to the bride's family and take the dowry back to the groom's village are either rented wheeled carts drawn by men hired in Lukang or trays carried on poles by the groom's *ch'in tsu* and/or fellow villagers. Only a wealthy family can afford to use the many hand-carried trays, since all the carriers must be fed banquet food and those who carry heavy items are given *hung pao* (money wrapped in a red paper packet). Far fewer wheeled carts are

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764 [264] who act as cooks for the occasion. The meal is elaborate and consists of many of the same meats, soups, and other dishes normally served at a festival dinner.

Burial

[787] During the course of the next day the actual burial takes place in the public cemetery at a time and place determined by a geomancer or *k'an feng shui te jen*. A number of tables are set up in the courtyard of the house beforehand, with many baskets of food prepared as sacrifices to the spirit of the dead displayed on them. These baskets of food, as well as lengths of dark colored cloth covered with written messages of condolence and money, have been sent by relatives and friends. The [431] money and cloth are sent to the family almost immediately after the death. The baskets of food and wine are sent the day the burial takes place.

Once the sacrifices and incense have been set up on the tables, the coffin is carried out of the house and placed at the head of the tables. [481] Many male mourners, including sworn brothers of members of the bereaved family, *ch'in ch'i*, friends, and neighbors—or representatives from the families of these people—then "worship" the spirit of the deceased, each performing an elaborate sacrificial rite on his hands [602] and knees. One of the "heaviest mourners" (those with the closest patrilineal ties to the dead man) accompanies each one in the ritual in order to thank him. Throughout the worshipping the women relatives, especially the daughters of the deceased, lean against the closed coffin and wail aloud.[8]

While this ritual takes place outside the house, a small group of village men goes to the cemetery to dig the grave. When it is time for the burial, the coffin is carried on the shoulders of several men to the cemetery, followed by the mourners. Usually, only the heaviest mourners and close friends accompany the coffin the whole distance (about two miles) to the cemetery. However, many others who attended the funeral come out to the road to send off the coffin and mourners. While still on the road near the village, the closest lineal [602] relatives of the deceased suddenly turn to these others and crawl on [481] their hands and knees toward them. This is done as a form of obeisance, to thank them for their participation and to beg them not to bother to go to the cemetery. Then the mourners are helped to their feet by friends and more distant relatives such as *ch'in ch'i* and run to catch up with the coffin and the other mourners.

764 At the cemetery an elaborate ceremonial is conducted by a man who 791 is often a combination geomancer and shaman (*fa shih*). In his capac- 756 ity as geomancer, he is present to see that the coffin is placed in the proper position, and as shaman he is expected to invite the gods to the

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ceremony and, especially, to obtain the god of the earth's permission to break the earth and to ask him to accept the body. Once the burial is completed, all return to the village where an elaborate dinner is held for all those who participated in any stage of the funeral.

Several weeks after the burial, on a date set by a geomancer, the members of the mourning family reconvene at the cemetery to dedicate the tombstone. They again wear white mourning clothes, and a ritual is conducted by the same geomancer-shaman.

Mourning

After a death, the descendants usually observe heavy mourning for forty-nine days (seven weeks). During this period they worship the spirit of the deceased twice each day, at sunrise and sunset, coming together to wail and chant as they did on the day of the funeral.

On the hundredth day after the death, or sometimes after one year, another mourning ritual is held. On this day it is common to burn the temporary paper ancestral tablet and transfer the dead person's name and death day to the family's permanent wooden ancestral tablet. Until very recently, the name was placed on a small permanent wooden tablet instead of on the temporary paper one, which made it unnecessary to transfer the name to the main family tablet. It is also on the hundredth day that the mourning family sends sweet cakes to everyone who sent money or gifts at the time of the death. The sweet cakes are a symbolic message "that things are now better."

For three years after the death, patrilineal descendants of the deceased are supposed to wear the lengths of colored yarn to show they are mourning. At the end of this period, they usually wear red yarn for a few days just to show that things are now good again. Actually, in the village the colored mourning yarn is most frequently worn for only a year. It is also customary during this three-year mourning period for the women to wail at the grave when the family goes to the cemetery each Ch'ing Ming Chieh (a holiday early in April) to clean the graves and offer sacrifices.

If in the years following a death the family has not been able to produce a boy child or has been in financial difficulties or poor health, they may have the grave dug up and the coffin moved to a new and more propitious spot determined by a geomancer. This takes place at least three years, but usually more than ten years, after the death. Specialists from Lukang or from some other village are hired for such an occasion. These men, in the presence of the closest relatives of the deceased, pick out each bone, clean it, and attach it in a special order to a short charcoal pole which is placed in a tall ceramic pot. The pot is then reburied in the new grave and a new tombstone, engraved with the date of reburial, is set up.

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affairs, the cause of their troubles is often laid to a relative who left no descendants to care for his spirit. It then becomes necessary for the family to placate the spirit by adopting a child as his official descendant and worshipper. All such adoptions are eventually recorded on the ancestral tablet. The name of the adopted child is engraved next to the name of the deceased, along with a note stating that he was adopted for the purpose of continuing the line (*ch'eng szu*).

Buddhism

In the Hsin Hsing village area, Buddhism, at least as an independent religious system, is of negligible importance. While there are visible elements of Buddhism such as the scroll bearing the image of the goddess Kuan Yin, it is difficult to distinguish features of Buddhist ritual from Taoist features. Women take the most active part in all forms of Buddhist worship, and once each year they worship at scattered temples located in the *hsien*. In spite of the mixture of religious images in Buddhist temples, the Buddhist rites are distinctly identified as such.

Popular Taoism

Of the various religious practices discussed thus far, popular Taoism may be said to occupy the most time and attention of the Hsin Hsing villagers. Popular Taoism is a debased derivative of Lao-tze's "Way" and centers around a hierarchy of gods infiltrated by many diverse supernatural beings or forces. Belief in these supernatural entities is derived from the Yin-Yang principle, the concept of the universe as the sum of the infinity of all the positive and negative forces that comprise it. In popular Taoism, the positive and negative forces have become personified; thus, it is not only necessary to have priests (*tao shih*) but shamans (*fa shih* and *t'iao t'ung*) too are needed to conduct religious ceremonies to worship the gods and to perform magical rites to propitiate the evil supernatural beings who might otherwise harm the believers.

The hierarchy of gods in popular Taoism is ranked in order from the highest T'ien Kung, the heavenly God (also referred to by the villagers as Yu Ti, the Jade Emperor), down through others of lesser importance, to an assortment of village gods and private, individual gods at the bottom of the hierarchy. Many are historic personages of the early dynasties, particularly the Sung and T'ang, who have been deified for their remarkable deeds. Their feats are well known, although the stories of some apparently have mythical backgrounds.

The villagers consider the hierarchy of gods to be fashioned on the order of the imperial court of traditional China. They are thus, as described by one of the better educated older villagers, "what would

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621 578 797 778 554 422 families do not express their antagonism openly, for this would be a serious breach of etiquette. Interestingly enough, neither of the two families which personally possess these private gods is a member of any *tsu* organization in the village. It appears that the possession of these gods by the two families is a means that each family has used to establish a place for itself in the village. The family in possession of Er Shih Kung, the god which has become popular in the village seems to have actually achieved this goal.

Other Supernatural Beings, Forces, and Beliefs

776 In addition to gods and ancestors the villagers believe in evil supernatural beings. They are known as demons or *kuei*, but, out of fear of their malevolence and respect for their power, the villagers more often speak of them as gods or *shen*. The already mentioned Good Brothers belong to this group of *kuei*. "When one hits such a bad thing," one's spirit becomes possessed or is taken away by the supernatural being, and sickness, ill-fortune, or even death may result. It then becomes necessary to secure the services of a shaman or diviner to determine the cause of the trouble and appease the spirit.

[775] [753] [761] [777] [756]

Fate and Divination

777 787 Beyond and stronger than the influence of gods and spirits is an all-pervasive force, fate. It affects and predetermines the over-all direction of life and events. The fate of an individual is determined by his eight birth characters and "the set of forces of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, which were connected with the movement of the stars in directing the mystical operation of time, which, in turn, determined the nature of personal events" (Yang, 1961:135). The Hsin Hsing villagers' belief in the concept of fate was well described by Kulp (1925:171) for Phenix Village when he wrote,

> Fate decides all things. Fate determined the time of birth and it will determine the hour of death, the manner of death and the experiences between birth and death. It is useless to strive against fate. All one can do is to learn the will of fate and conform in the best possible way. One may try to outwit fate but sooner or later one is doomed to defeat. Such are the attitudes that people hold regarding the great events and experiences of life.

This belief leads to various forms of divination that are designed to determine what the individual has in store for him and what, if anything, can be done about it. Thus, if resort to ancestors, gods, magic, or medicines fails to produce results, the difficulty is accepted as predetermined by fate. The concept is especially valuable in preventing a weakening of the general belief structure, for if all attempts at manipulation through supernatural influence should fail, the concept of fate

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very poor but devout pot master for the Earth God realized that the villagers did not intend to contribute to the care of the god's statue. As a pious act he used his own money for this purpose. He was apparently motivated in part by his need for security within the village community. His family is poor and unrelated to any of the other large or small patrilineal kin groups in the village. He appears to have counted on this act to assure his family of assistance at any time of need in the future. And, in fact, his gesture was much appreciated by the village as a whole. It greatly improved his reputation and strengthened his family's relations within the village.

In addition to the village-owned statues which are cared for by the pot masters, there are also several statues of public gods which are owned by individual families and kept in their own family *kung t'ing*. Some families are more devout than others and may spend a great deal of money, sometimes as much as NT $300 to 400 (US $8–11), to purchase a statue of a god. These families generally own a statue of the Earth God and may sometimes purchase the statues of minor local gods to which they have taken a special fancy.

PRIESTS AND SHAMANS

The villagers depend upon specialists to communicate and deal with the gods and other supernatural spirits in their behalf. These specialists are either the Taoist priests known as *tao shih* or the shamans known as *fa shih* and *t'iao t'ung*. Since the powers of these men are not the same, the manner and degree to which they are able to function as intermediaries between the ordinary people and the supernatural varies widely.

The *tao shih*, as a member of a religious priesthood, functions purely as a religious practitioner. He is able to conduct rituals and ceremonies, but has no supernatural powers. The *fa shih* and the *t'iao t'ung*, on the other hand, have definite personal supernatural powers which enable them to cope with evil forces. Of the two, the villagers consider the *fa shih* the more powerful, because he himself has powers which enable him to confront the demons and exorcise them. The *t'iao t'ung* has no power himself but "only borrows his power from the gods"; it is only while he is possessed by a god that he has any supernatural powers.

There are no *tao shih* living in Hsin Hsing. Those who conduct services in Hsin Hsing are usually residents of Lukang. Almost all of them are ordinary family men who do not earn their livelihood by farming but have shops of some kind in the city. They are, so to speak, "their own boss"; their businesses can either be closed temporarily or some employee or member of the family can be left in charge for one,

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793 two, or even three full days at a time when a funeral or some other ceremony must be performed. It would, of course, be impossible for a farmer to engage in activities which might call him away from the harvest or other such imperative activity. Furthermore, most farmers lack the modicum of literacy necessary for the performance of certain ceremonies.

The *tao shih* in Lukang received their training from older members of the priesthood. These men do not belong to an organized church, for there is none in Lukang. In fact, the priesthood itself is loosely organized and informal, although all its members in the area do wear a special signet ring. A man who wishes to become a *tao shih* declares his intention to an established priest and, with the latter's permission, joins his group as a novice. He is given instruction in the various ceremonies and learns how to use the special ritual instruments. As his training progresses, he accompanies other members of the group on their trips into the countryside and assists as they perform ceremonies. Eventually, he either becomes a member of the group in which he received his training or conducts ceremonies as a independent priest.

• 756 There are three *fa shih* and three *t'iao t'ung* in Hsin Hsing village serving it and neighboring villages. Actually, these men seldom perform outside the village, and shamans from other villages are occasionally called into Hsin Hsing by people who were not helped by their village shaman or who, for personal reasons, prefer a shaman from another place. This is especially true in the case of a nonresident *fa shih*, an older man, who is considered more powerful than the ones in Hsin Hsing. However, such cases are infrequent, and most people find their own village shaman sufficiently able to meet their needs.

756 Too, most villagers find it economically advantageous to engage the
465 services of a local shaman rather than an outsider. When the *fa shih* or *t'iao t'ung* is a fellow villager, one is not expected to pay him any fee for his services, but need only feed him after he performs. The food is usually a simple noodle dish or rice and meat soup. Although it is prepared in large quantities in order to feed all the villagers who were present during the shaman's ritual, the cost to the host is small. But when a shaman is called from outside, he must be paid a fee in addition to being fed with the other participants. The money is normally wrapped in a packet of red paper and handed to the shaman. The villagers usually know how much they are expected to pay, and both parties assume that the amount will be adequate. If the family does not give the shaman enough money, the villagers note that "the shaman probably will say nothing, but will not return should he be called."

Most families make every effort to compensate the shaman amply

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and are just as anxious to satisfy their village shaman. The family feels some debt of gratitude when he performs a ritual for them without payment. In some cases they even feel obliged to repay him in some way and may be unusually cooperative when he needs assistance. They may help him with some minor work in his fields, or may patronize the store which is owned by one *t'iao t'ung*, or buy meat from the intinerant butcher, also a local *t'iao t'ung*.

Thus, a shaman does receive certain indirect compensation for his work in his own village, but since there is so little opportunity for actual or direct financial recompense, one wonders what moves a man to take up such an occupation. In the cases of the *fa shih* and *t'iao t'ung* in Hsin Hsing and neighboring villages, the motivation clearly is not any mental or physical abnormality. These men are male members of the community without observable afflictions who only in their performance as shamans become anything out of the ordinary. At all other times they function in what appears to be a perfectly normal manner.

However, the shamans of Hsin Hsing do seem to share one trait which is less evident in their fellow villagers. They all are somewhat aggressive men seeking to raise their status and prestige in the village. Apparently, the greatest inducement for them to become shamans was the opportunity the occupation presented for gaining position and recognition. Since the status of a villager depends at least in part upon his rendering public service to his village and area, every time a shaman performs he receives recognition for his contribution.

The most frequently employed *fa shih* in Hsin Hsing is a rather intelligent man presently attempting to accumulate some land, who recently built a small building in which he grows mushrooms. He seems to be trying very hard to raise his status in the village, and in his active role of *fa shih* he manages to keep in the public eye. The villagers feel that he gives a great deal of his time for the village and for his fellows. The two other *fa shih* in the village are older men who for various reasons are called upon only to perform certain functions. One of them is frequently away from the village, since he works in Taipei.

The three *t'iao t'ung* in Hsin Hsing are men who are not exclusively engaged in farming. The *t'iao t'ung* for the village god Ta Shih Kung, a butcher who peddles meat on a bicycle and does some farming on a small piece of land, is a minor partner in a butchering company located in a village about two miles from Hsin Hsing. Unfortunately, this man has been ill a great deal, and since he has frequently not been available when the villagers wished to communicate with the god, his services are not often employed. In his stead the villagers call the *t'iao t'ung* for the important private god, Er Shih Kung, who

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makes himself readily available and is willing to perform. This is surely one reason for Er Shih Kung's growing popularity. This man, about thirty-four years of age, owns the village general store, does a little farming, and is the head of the Farmers' Association's village unit. In addition to these undertakings, he also takes an active part in all village events such as the coordination of village funeral arrangements.

The third *t'iao t'ung* for the less important village private god, Chu Wang Yeh, now has a vegetable stand in Taipei. His family still resides in the village, and he travels back and forth between the village and the city. However, he usually is not available in the village when his services are needed. On occasion, other Hsin Hsing villagers living in Taipei call upon him to help them communicate with the god.

It appears, then, that the two most active shamans in the village are the young *fa shih* and the *t'iao t'ung* for Er Shih Kung. These men apparently enjoy the popularity and increased contact with the villagers which their work affords them. At the same time, they undoubtedly recognize that their position in the community is enhanced each time they perform "a public service."

Any village man may become a *fa shih* if he is willing to devote time and energy to the intensive training involved in this undertaking. Master *fa shih* in Lukang or elsewhere are available as instructors. Under the tutelage of such a master, the novice learns how to conduct magical rituals and use potent charms and instruments of coercion with which he is able to exorcise malevolent demons or other spirits. In addition, the novice is taught the "special language of the gods," which enables him to communicate with them through the medium of a *t'iao t'ung*.

The latter has the ability to go into a trance and become possessed by a particular local god who, when he enters the body of the *t'iao t'ung*, speaks to the people in his own tongue. Only the *fa shih* can interpret this special language. Supposedly the *t'iao t'ung* does not understand it, and, like Western mediums, he claims he is unaware of what has taken place while he was in the trance.

The *t'iao t'ung* in the service of a local god is "chosen by that god" to serve him much as the god chooses his pot master. However, in this case, the candidates include only men who are interested in serving the god and the village, rather than representatives from all the village families. The prospective *t'iao t'ung* receives his training from, and is taught the god's language by, a master *fa shih* from Lukang. The training is conducted in complete secrecy and lasts for seven days.

Once the training is completed and the shaman is considered able to cope with the supernatural, he can be called upon to perform magical rituals when an illness strikes, particularly one which cannot be ex-

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plained easily or cured quickly by present-day medicine, or for any other problem in which the cause is believed to be supernatural.

The *t'iao t'ung* also sometimes deals in divination while in a trance. At such times the god speaking through him may, for example, give advance notice of future events such as the visit of a "guest god" from a distant area like the mainland of China or even some coming change in the life of a villager or in the village itself.

Perhaps the most important specialist in divination, however, is the geomancer. As we have noted earlier, he determines the auspicious time and place for important events like marriage, burial, or building a new house. He does this through the use of his special almanac, which is based on astrology, the conceptions of Yin-Yang, the Five Elements, and so on. The geomancer himself is usually an ordinary man, very often a farmer, whose divining activities are performed in his spare time for a small fee. He has generally been trained by an older geomancer, very often a relative. The training consists mainly in gaining a mastery of the uses of the almanac and in acquiring a familiarity with the formalities and proper sequences of the events which he must give advice about. One geomancer in Hsin Hsing village is scarcely literate, yet he has apparently mastered enough knowledge about his almanac's contents and the proper sequences of events to be employed frequently, especially in surrounding villages outside of Hsin Hsing. Hsin Hsing villagers, however, seem to prefer to call in an outside geomancer rather than to consult their own fellow villager. The villagers' awareness of the relative illiteracy of geomancers in general (who are nevertheless still called in for consultation) makes one suppose that the formal qualifications of the practitioner are less important than his acceptance as a recognized geomancer. His powers may not be considered to depend entirely on the amount of formal training he has had, or his function in relieving the members of the family from the responsibility of making a difficult decision may be sufficiently valued to make his actual qualifications unimportant in their eyes.

Other kinds of diviners, fortune-tellers, or people who are said to be able to communicate with the dead can be found in Lukang and other such towns and cities. Fortune-tellers are frequently itinerant, and occasionally pass through the villages offering their services.

When a fortune-teller happens to come through the village, it is not unlikely that he has heard that some family there has a problem in which a fortune-teller may be of assistance. In Hsin Hsing, for example, the very wealthy K'ang landlord family had nine daughters and two sons. Apparently, it was generally known that the family would like to give one daughter out for adoption, but was hesitating to do so for fear they would be criticized. It was at this point that a fortune-teller "happened" to come to the village and offer his service to the

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The twenty-fourth day of the fourth month is the birthday of the Hsin Hsing village god, Ta Shih Kung. Those villagers who have been working elsewhere normally come home for this *pai-pai*, and even some of the members of village families whose business or work has required them to move to the city return for this day and stay overnight or several days with relatives in the village. The main reason for this influx is that the celebration is one of the gayest and most festive of all those held during the year.

All families worship Ta Shih Kung in a joint *pai-pai* held in the courtyard of one of the largest *tsu* houses in the village. A shaman is present to exorcise any devils that may be near and to invite the god to eat the sacrificed food, the best the villagers have all year. Guests are invited from all over the area to join in the festivities, and for weeks or even months in advance the villagers issue invitations to relatives and friends. At the time of the *pai-pai*, the villagers even invite their neighbors' guests, if they happen to know them, to eat their food. People walk through the village, pounce upon acquaintances who are ambling along or who may have just come out of the house of another villager, and tug at their arms and clothing to get them into their homes to eat. (My wife and I were virtually dragged through seven different dinners that evening.) The villagers generally prepare so much food for the occasion that there is always enough for a few more, and they talk for months about the number of people they entertained that day. One old woman, a member of a relatively poor village family, boasted that she had had seventy guests at her house and that she had fed three tables of guests five times. Some of these guests stayed overnight and had to be fed again the next day. She spent NT $700 (US $19.50) on food and wine and had been saving her money for months for this occasion.

For the most part, all these guests reciprocate and invite the Hsin Hsing villagers to join them at the *pai-pai* celebrating the birthday of their own village god at a later date. The *pai-pai*, therefore, functions to maintain relationships with *ch'in ch'i* and friends and to enable families to meet new people. In addition, since the villages hold these *pai-pai* at different times, the people of the whole area are assured of a continuing source of entertainment.

The entertainment includes not only the good food and the contact with different people but also a puppet show performed by a professional group hired from a city. The puppet show is based on stories from dynastic history and is a source of delight to the villagers and their guests. Adults and children from neighboring villages usually wander over during the course of the day to watch the show. The carnival atmosphere of the occasion is augmented by the presence of vendors of food, sweets, sugarcane, and betel nut who come from Lukang and surrounding villages to sell their wares.

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the event, however, noting that the family was poor and had too many girls already; implicit in their gossip was a recognition that the family may have preferred to have the female infant die.

The attitude of the villagers toward the old and new medicine is a useful example of the way in which practical, external factors can affect "folk" beliefs and values. Here availability, finances, and family circumstances have combined to promote the acceptance of a new body of knowledge. The rural community of the Hsin Hsing area has accepted Western medicine without damage to its value structure or to its beliefs, incorporating the new quite comfortably into the old framework. Thus, when the villager calls upon a Western-style medical practitioner first of all, and the illness is not cured, he can still reinterpret the symptoms *and assume that the* cause was supernatural after all—perhaps possession by a demon. Then, to cope with the supernatural, he calls in a shaman.

Shamanistic Curing

Probably the most common form of illness treated in this manner is that which the villagers call a "fright" (*ching*). In this "illness" a child or infant does not eat or sleep properly and cries a great deal. The mother may decide that the child "has hit into a bad thing" (*ch'ung*) and that some kind of malevolent demon is causing the trouble. Although she may call in a Western-style doctor, most villagers assume that such symptoms result from supernatural causes and therefore require supernatural treatment.

The many different kinds of charms and instruments at the disposal of the *fa shih* are designed to enable him to bring about the release of the child's soul or spirit. If the patient does not respond at once to treatment, it may be repeated in a day or two or a more powerful *fa shih* may be called in. For the most part, whatever was causing the symptoms, they usually disappear after a few days, and the villagers consider that the *fa shih's* powers have cured the child.

Sometimes in the case of a fright a parent will attempt to effect a cure without the aid of a formally recognized shaman, especially when it appears that the child has been frightened by a definite agent which has caused his spirit to leave his body. If, for example, a dog is believed responsible, the parent will secure some of the dog's hair, wave it over the child's chest, and repeat over and over, "child's spirit return to the child." Or, the parent may feel that the child was frightened by some person. This was the case when a bearded American friend of ours visited the village and frightened a child. The American was then asked to spit into a cup brought by the child's mother. The saliva was brewed with some soup, fed to the child, and incantations were repeated to help the child's spirit return.

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75 Often the cause of the illness is not so easily discernible nor is its cure effected so simply. Even when a Western-style doctor is summoned, the anxiety of the patient's family may be so great that while the doctor is attempting to cure the illness, they may resort to supernatural techniques to discover its exact cause and necessary treatment. On occasion, a village family may either go to a fortune-teller in Lukang or consult one who happens to pass through at the time to learn the cause of the trouble. More frequently, however, they call in a *t'iao t'ung* to communicate directly with a god to learn what kind of supernatural being is involved and exactly how it may be successfully appeased or exorcised.

755 The *t'iao t'ung* goes to the family's ancestral-worship room and there sits among the people who, out of interest in the session or
• 756 concern for the sick person, have gathered to observe the ritual. As those around him sit and talk, the *t'iao t'ung* stares into space; gradually, his hands, feet, and body start to shake. Usually, in fifteen minutes he is in a trance and possessed by the god. At this point he becomes extremely agitated and starts to scream and chant. He springs high into the air and blindly staggers around the room. One or two men hold a special cloth apron he wears in order to prevent him from injuring himself or those around him while he is convulsed. Within minutes his paroxysm subsides, and he is brought to the altar where he begins to chant in the language of the gods. An assistant (a *fa shih*), sits at a table in front of the altar and asks the pertinent questions in the special language. Through the medium of the *t'iao t'ung*, the god gives his answers. These are recorded by the assistant, who in some cases is known to be illiterate. The assistant writes certain characters with a brush and ink on a special paper. Once the god's words have been recorded he is presumed to depart, and the *t'iao t'ung* comes out of his trance. He usually is wet with perspiration and sometimes bears injuries incurred while he was convulsed.

In some cases of illness, the instructions the god gives to effect a cure can be carried out immmediately by the family itself. The god tells the cause of the ailment and gives directions for the appeasement of the spirits, e.g., the family must burn a specific amount of paper money as an offering for them. In addition, the family may be directed to feed the patient some herbal medicine prescribed by the god to eliminate the fever caused by the presence of the demon.

[789] In some cases of illness, however, the god will inform the people that a cure can be effected only if the demon is not only appeased but also exorcised. In such an instance, it is necessary to call in a *fa shih* who has powerful means at his disposal to accomplish this feat, such as charms, a sword, and a whip with a handle shaped like a snake (symbolizing a mythical white snake which helps the gods fight the demons). In addition, the *fa shih* may make an agreement with the

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demon, who can be bought off with bribes of food and money, to make him release the victim's spirit and then leave.

If neither the supernatural efforts of the *t'iao t'ung* and the *fa shih* nor the medical efforts of a doctor produce a cure, the family may conclude that the supernatural causes of the illness require more than medical or magical means. Recognizing the inadequacy of man and shaman in the situation, they are forced to decide that it is necessary to appeal to the gods for help. The family then asks the entire village to sacrifice to the gods in the hope that they may intervene in behalf of the sick person. If even this effort fails and the patient dies, the villagers then conclude that the person was "fated to die at this time." While one informant noted that "Fate is a person's explanation of what has already happened," most villagers feel that "a person is fated to die at a certain time and the gods can do little to control or change that fate. If the person becomes ill when he is due to die, it is no use to call a *t'iao t'ung*. That person's life is already full and so there is nothing that can be done to make his life longer. If the gods could save those who are fated to die, then later there would be so many people that people would eat people."

A Case in Point

During my stay in Hsin Hsing village, I witnessed a case in which a family used Western- and Chinese-style doctors, several *t'iao t'ung* and *fa shih*, and eventually a joint village *pai-pai* to the gods in order to cure a sick member of the family. The family's twenty-year-old daughter had displayed signs of insanity over a period of several years. When she was disturbed she was subject to attacks of extreme depression accompanied by brief, but sudden, outbursts of intense crying, screaming, and cursing. When anyone, including her parents, attempted to quiet her, she would strike out at them wildly. For weeks at a time, the girl could scarcely perform her ordinary duties. Then her aberration would pass and for several months or nearly a year the girl would behave normally until she was taken with another attack.

The first of these attacks took place while the girl was living in Taipei, where she kept house for her father who worked there. The girl's mother and other siblings were living in the village, working the family's small piece of land. When the girl first became disturbed, a Western-style and then a Chinese-style doctor were called in to treat her.[3] When they were unable to help, a master *fa shih* was called in and, according to the villagers, cured the girl completely. However, the *fa shih* became angry when he was not given enough money as a reward for his aid. The family and villagers feel that as a result he put a curse on the girl and that since that time she has suffered these intermittent attacks.[4]

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158 159 755 756 782 The girl was eventually brought back to the village to live, and it was during the period of one attack that I was able to observe the techniques used to deal with the disturbance. Over a period of weeks a series of *t'iao t'ung* were called in an attempt to determine the cause of the problem. After each visit by a *t'iao t'ung*, a *fa shih* was employed and every time some more powerful master *fa shih* was called upon. Finally, the family of the girl asked the entire village to take part in a *pai-pai* in order to ask the gods to help. Four or five weeks after the onset of the attack the girl's symptoms seemed to disappear, and she resumed her normal village life. The only explanation the villagers could offer for the recovery was that perhaps the powers of the shaman, combined with the help elicited from the gods, rid the girl of the demons which possessed her.

Other Forms of Magical Activities

731 621 787 789 756 In addition to the healing rituals, there are other magical activities frequently carried on in the Hsin Hsing village area. When a village house catches fire, prodigious energy is expended on rituals to rid the village of the menacing "fire spirit" or "demon" usually believed to have caused the conflagration. On one such occasion, a *t'iao t'ung* was called in to help the villagers find out how to safeguard the rest of the village from fire, and a *fa shih* was called upon to exorcise the malevolent demon. The fire spirit ritual was held late at night, and practically the whole village turned out to watch the proceedings. The *t'iao t'ung*, assisted by about seven other men, held a large wooden chair which was normally used to seat the statues of the gods during processions, such as that held for Matsu. At the *t'iao t'ung's* initiative, the men began to shake the chair as an invitation for the god to come and sit in it. Gradually, the *t'iao t'ung* went into a trance, and while the god was trying to take his seat in the chair, the men shook it more and more violently, so that it appeared to take the strength of all of them to hold on to it. Once the god was seated in the chair the shaking diminished. At this point the *t'iao t'ung*, possessed by the god, began to chant. A *fa shih* was present to record the god's words, which told the people how they could get rid of the fire spirit and protect the other village houses. The god directed the people to appease the demon by burning paper money in different parts of the village and also advised them to place protective charms on each house. These charms were made by the *fa shih* who had been called upon to exorcise the demon.

By the light of several lanterns and torches, the villagers, the *t'iao t'ung*, and the *fa shih* began to proceed through the village as directed. At intervals during this march, a man carrying the chair suddenly would become possessed by the god. Eventually, all these men became

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possessed and uncontrollably violent. They writhed and reeled and pulled the chair in different directions. At times the sheer weight of the moving chair caused them to fall to the ground in a heap. Villagers who had come to witness the ritual ran for cover for fear of being trampled by the frenzied men or struck by the chair they wielded. Finally, when the entire route had been covered, the god took his leave, and the men came out of their trances. Many of them bore bruises caused by their many falls under the heavy chair.

The villagers look forward to such exciting occasions and talk about them long after they are past. The exploits of the *t'iao t'ung* are a common topic of discussion among the villagers, and some consider them capable of performing superhuman acts while possessed. The magnificent feats of the *t'iao t'ung* in the old days are commonly recounted, and people admit that there are only a few *t'iao t'ung* in the area who now possess really unusual powers.

Of the magical rituals and shamanistic feats discussed by villagers, one of the most unusual is a feat performed by a *t'iao t'ung* while in a trance walking barefoot on hot coals without being harmed. The villagers note that few *t'iao t'ung* attempt this anymore. Some villagers claim that the *t'iao t'ung* used to walk on water. A young man related a story to me and several villagers about a *t'iao t'ung* who, while in a trance, had tried this several years earlier. Everyone present dissolved into fits of hysterical laughter at the last line of the tale—"When the *t'iao t'ung* tried to walk on the water he went under and was drowned."

However, there are certain classic feats which are performed successfully by the *t'iao t'ung* today. One of the most common is for a possessed *t'iao t'ung* to "cut his head open with a sword" without seriously harming himself. Commonly, this is done at a ceremonial called "taking water," which is performed only once in several years by any particular village, though within the immediate area each year there is usually one village which holds it. A *t'iao t'ung*, while possessed by a god, informs the villagers that they must schedule this ceremony for a specific date at a certain river. On the appointed day, most of the male villagers accompany the *t'iao t'ung* to the river, which may be several miles away. At the river, the *t'iao t'ung* goes into a trance and blindly staggers into the water. All the villagers run into the water after him. He is handed a sword with which he cuts his forehead, and the other men push his head to the surface of the water, allowing his blood to mix with the river water. Since the *t'iao t'ung* is possessed by the god his blood is sacred, and when it mixes with the water, the water is considered holy. At the moment of consecration, the villagers frantically fill the kettles, bottles, and barrels which they have brought with them. The water is carried home and used for its

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"curative and health-giving powers." Although the villagers of the Hsin Hsing area realize the importance of boiling drinking water, they will drink this holy water immediately after taking it out of the river and claim that they suffer no ill effects.

When the villagers have filled their receptacles, they depart for their own village. The *t'iao t'ung*, who is still in a trance, is carried on the top of a large sedan chair ordinarily used to transport the statues of gods. On his head is a large bandage. Although he has suffered only a superficial wound, the *t'iao t'ung's* actually cutting his head with a sword is impressive to the observers, since the blood flow increases when he dips his head into the water. All along the route homeward other villagers, already informed of the ceremonial, display sacrifices to the god who possesses the *t'iao t'ung* and bring out bottles and kettles in which to receive some of the holy water that is being transported in large barrels.

THE FUNCTIONS OF RITUAL IN HSIN HSING VILLAGE

Having examined the occasion and occurrence of many rites and rituals, we turn now to ways in which they function within the structure of village society and support it. Generally, their most obvious contribution is that participation in the ritual itself helps to relieve the anxiety of people who are desperately seeking to survive in a world of uncertainty or looking for solutions to otherwise insoluble problems. This is true whether the ritual is designed for protection or to moderate natural or supernatural disaster—illness, fire, or demonic possession—since at the very least the villager feels he is coming to grips with the problem. Other results of ritual are less obvious.

Curing rites, for example, resemble all medical practices in having useful side effects or fringe benefits beyond the actually therapeutic. Not only the patient but the whole family must be considered. The Chinese cultural focus on the family emphasizes the reciprocal responsibility of family and individual. Thus, a Taiwanese family must take advantage of every possible means to cure an ailing member or be looked down upon and criticized by the entire community for neglect, which increases the anxiety of the situation.

Therefore, when Western medicine does not work, the traditional-minded villagers turn at once to the shaman, feeling that the very failure proves that the illness is of supernatural origin. But even the skeptical families which have no firm belief in the potency of the magical rituals usually have them performed. This may be partly to avoid social censure, but, in fact, not even the most skeptical are entirely convinced that the rituals are ineffectual. Such villagers have been heard to say, "perhaps the ritual does help. And could one allow

178 many respects remained surprisingly unchanged. Brides today wear white
[588] western style wedding dresses, but otherwise the ritual of the nuptial
ceremonies is much the same as it was at the turn of the century. The
[969] head of one household destroyed his ancestral tablets several years ago
in a fit of anger, the ancestors having "let his mother and his wife
die," but with this one exception every family in the village continues
[756] to make regular sacrifices to the deceased. Western medicine and
relatively modern medical facilities are readily available, and yet two
men are able to make a living in the Hsulin area as shamans. Many
[302] [746] of the young village men wear their hair long in imitation of the
Japanese imitation of Elvis Presley, but they are still willing to serve
as bearers every year when the god Shang Ti Kung is carried in a heavy
sedan chair across a bed of hot coals. Nor are these simply empty obser-
vances carried on out of the inertia of the young and nostalgia of the
[771] old. Particularly in respect to religion, the traditional life of
[794] [776] [778] the village displays real vitality. As late as 1925 a group of
villagers established a new committee to organize worship for the god
Tai Tzu Yeh, and in the year immediately before the war the people of
Chichou contributed both time and money to rebuild the Shang Ti Kung
temple. Even as late as 1960 it was possible for the committee in
charge of the temple to collect several thousand dollars to hire two
Taoist nuns to care for the building.

In one very important respect, however, there has been a real and
irreversible change in the life of Hsiachichou, a change which has
begun to have a substantial effect upon marriage forms and family life.

251 eight years. Although farmers have been relatively will-
262 ing to accept the recommendations of agricultural experts,
744 the government agents and farmers' association officials concerned with sanitation have had more success with women than men. Male and female agents in the farmers' association in Hsin Tien both agree that unless the woman is persuaded, few changes will be made in the kitchen. The officials and villagers alike claimed that no matter what a man said, a woman ran the kitchen as she pleased. Most food is eaten the day it is acquired and pork especially, is never kept overnight. This custom requires daily marketing.

164 Colds and flu are very common in winter. Almost everyone has periodic intestinal disorders and skin infections are endemic. Foot and hand infections are occasion-
[241] ally very severe. Working in the paddy fields with their load of human excreta in solution is particularly dangerous with open cuts. Injuries such as broken bones are most common among children and men who work in the local coal mines.

759 Treatment of disease and injury may involve many
756 distinct techniques. There are a great variety of professional medical practitioners such as Western-style doctors, traditional Chinese doctors, various folk specialties such as acupuncture, different shamans, and temple priests who
[562] furnish charms to drink. Most professionals are males but midwives are invariably females.

791 by duplicating the orientation. Since there are family
823
787 burial plots, geomancers are not always used for additional burials.

[354] The most frequent call for a geomancer to come to Sanlei is to orient the kitchen stove. Sanlei villagers usually consult a geomancer from Pouti but occasionally
[764] employ a more expensive one from Hsin Tien. Although the literature mentions relocation of ancestral graves if a family has great misfortune, this has not happened in Sanlei but about twenty years ago, one family removed a rock near a tomb and planted three trees as directed by a geomancer who was called as a consultant after much misfortune.

791 As previously stated, Talei Li has many excellent
823 sites for tombs with powerful feng shui coordinates. Two
764 of the most famous geomancers in Taipei have purchased
787 many of these sites. They then select them for clients and also sell the sites to the clients and make a profit
[464] both on the sale and as a consultant. One village mason
[434] and two village women earn a significant part of their incomes helping erect the elaborate tombs.

756 Shamans of various kinds are still consulted for illnesses although villagers believe the frequency is declining. Three different men, all from nearby villages, are called in periodically. However, trips are also made to the consulting rooms of two others, a ching tsao hsien

756 (master of green grass) in Hsin Tien and a mi fang hsien (master of secret remedies) in Taipei. Shamans usually appear to be consulted with reference to illnesses which are psychosomatic in nature or those which are relatively hopeless, i.e., medical advice has not worked. This latter may be merely because sufficient time for medical treat-
755 ment to take effect has not elapsed. If someone is sick, many kinds of practitioners may be consulted quickly, both medical and religious. Serious illness in children, male and female alike, stimulates the call for a shaman quicker
761 than would identical symptoms in adults. Shamans are
755 rarely used for old people (beyond age 60) who have not been vigorous recently because after 60, death is considered inevitable and any years granted beyond 60 were only due to the favor of the gods. With a terminal illness, the family patiently waits for death without treatment.

793 Some of the temples in Hsin Tien and Taipei have
[787] priests such as Tao jen (Men of the tao). Priests are consulted with reference to the suitability of a pair for marriage (kan ming hsien) and also for illness (hung t'ou
[755] Taoist). Curing involves a procedure much like that described for the fortune sticks in the village temple except the stick specifies a potion to be consumed instead of a fortune. Priests themselves do not have the specific personal powers of shamans but do have the ability to perform
[764] proper rituals. Two part-time hei t'ou (Black-headed